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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guide is to provide educators in Region V (the Southeast) and in Arkansas in particular with a reference to the network of federally-funded technical assistance providers. It addresses questions about technical assistance: its primary functions, principles and service delivery strategies, circumstances appropriate to technical assistance, and service providers in Region V. Technical assistance is professional development (preservice and inservice experiences related to program development, implementation, and evaluation) and support for organizational restructuring or major program changes (small group assistance, group facilitation, materials, training manuals, networking). Principles of effective technical assistance include working with systems, helping clients identify problems and find solutions, valuing diversity and access, using what is known about adult learners, building capacity, translating policy into effective practice, using varied service delivery strategies, recognizing challenges associated with ongoing growth and change, and being cost effective. Circumstances that require technical assistance are listed. Questions related to choosing technical assistance providers are offered that involve audience and expectations, environmental analysis, planning, implementation, assessment, and institutionalization of change. A profile of technical assistance providers available to the state of Arkansas lists contact information, purpose, and description of services for the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center, Regional Educational Laboratory, Desegregation Assistance Center, Regional Resource Center for Special Education, Regional Technology in Education Consortium, and Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Consortium. (SAS)

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Federal Technical Assistance User's Guide

A guidebook for assisting Region V educators in identifying Federal educational services and resources available in the state of

ARKANSAS

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AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

RC 021523

Federal Technical Assistance: User's Guide

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: A USER'S GUIDE

The purpose of this User's Guide is to provide educators in Region V with a convenient reference to the available network of federally-funded technical assistance providers. The following section is organized around four questions:

- What is technical assistance?
- What are the principles of effective assistance?
- When is technical assistance appropriate?
- Who provides technical assistance in Region V?

Following a discussion of these questions and a summary, we provide contact information for current federally-funded technical assistance providers in Region V.

What is Technical Assistance?

Technical assistance is divided between two primary functions: professional development and support. Professional development refers to a variety of pre-service and in-service experiences that enable educators to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate programs. Professional development may focus on helping people develop general skills or knowledge (e.g., through conference presentations), or it may be relatively intensive, focusing on systemic change (e.g., through ongoing intensive support).

Professional development may also be long-term or short-term. For example, analyzing disaggregated data for designing a program to improve student achievement may be a task with which educators are unfamiliar. A workshop on data disaggregation and analysis may provide the skills necessary to help design an effective program. Professional development may be enough if the needed knowledge and skills don't require major changes in roles and relationships (e.g., a school faculty that needs to learn how to access and use the Internet).

Professional development is not usually intensive enough to support successful implementation of new programs or restructuring of organizations, particularly when there are major changes. In such cases, both professional development and support are needed. Ongoing technical assistance is crucial when significant help related to the knowledge and tasks required by the program is provided to those charged with carrying out those changes. For example, when principals are asked to change from a managerial style to transformational leadership, ongoing support may be needed. Support may take the form of one-on-one or small group assistance; group facilitation; materials, such as training manuals; outside "experts," or professional networks.

What are the principles of effective technical assistance?

Effective Technical Assistance:

- Works with Systems
- Helps Clients Identify Problems and Find Solutions
- Values Diversity and Access
- Uses What is Known about Adult Learners
- Builds Capacity
- Translates Policy into Effective Practice
- Uses Varied Service Delivery Strategies
- Recognizes Challenges Associated with Ongoing Growth and Change
- Is Cost Effective

Works with systems. Effective technical assistance observes, analyzes, provides feedback, and maintains concern about the system as a whole and how changes in one part affect the rest of the system. As such, effective technical assistance is usually not provided as "one shot workshops" that are disconnected with an overall plan or identified need. Technical assistance provided by individual service providers is part of a larger state and/or national system of technical assistance delivery. Effective technical assistance leverages systemic resources, builds on individual and organizational strengths, and is efficient and effective in its work.

Helps clients identify problems and find solutions. The essence of technical assistance is problem solving. Technical assistance first helps clients to analyze their environment, and then becomes invested in pursuing realistic solutions with them. Effective technical assistance uses a customized, client-specific approach and encourages the adoption of policies, models, and practices that benefit all children, especially those from high poverty communities.

Values diversity, equity, and access. Effective technical assistance recognizes that diversity–in opinions/thoughts, among cultural and racial groups, and in locales–strengthens and adds value to its efforts. Effective technical assistance is open to anyone who needs support, and creates a system that is free of barriers so that all may participate.

Uses what is known about how adults learn. Effective technical assistance is designed with a knowledge of how adults learn. This includes understanding that:

1. Adults bring a great deal of life experiences to a learning opportunity.
2. Adults need to be physically comfortable for effective learning.

3. Adults need to be psychologically comfortable for effective learning.
4. Adults seek out learning experiences in order to cope with specific life changes.
5. Adults tend to prefer single concept, single theory presentations that focus on application.
6. Adults have many commitments and demands on their time.
7. Adults have established a variety of reflexes to authority.
8. Adults have come to a learning opportunity with a set of expectations.

Builds capacity. The value of technical assistance comes from its direct applicability to increasing clients' knowledge and skills. Effective technical assistance providers constantly guard against fostering dependent relationships with clients. The role of technical assistance is to provide support and an external perspective to clients, so that they will be effective contributors to local and national school reform efforts.

Translates policy into effective practice. Effective technical assistance helps clients translate complex ideas into practice. Each technical assistance provider should have high standards for performance and design technical assistance that meets those standards while simultaneously meeting client needs with timely, relevant, and useful information.

Uses varied service delivery strategies. An extensive knowledge base, familiarity with clients and their needs, coordination with other service providers, and productive working relationships must be complemented by the efficient delivery of quality technical assistance services. Effective technical assistance is characterized by processes that continually identify, refine, and develop new strategies to assure that the quality of work meets standards of excellence, and has intended impacts and coherence. Finally, technical assistance should assist clients in leveraging available resources.

Recognizes challenges associated with ongoing growth and change. Ongoing growth and change present a unique set of challenges for educators. Effective technical assistance establishes rapport with clients, guides clients through understanding the purpose of technical assistance, and helps clients define problems and seek solutions that are tailored to fit specific contexts. Effective technical assistance recognizes that change and growth are ongoing processes that need time. Technical assistance should focus on thought and reflection in conjunction with action.

Is cost effective. Service delivery through technical assistance should recognize the scarcity of resources dedicated to education. Effective technical assistance maximizes the impact of financial, human, and information resources on the educational process through the application of cost effective service delivery.

When is technical assistance appropriate?

We cannot emphasize this rule too much: the greater the change expected of the participant, the more individualized and intense the technical assistance should be. Technical assistance:

- expands the vision of the organization
- helps participants learn and apply new skills
- provides an arena in which clients can increase their understanding of the context and programs
- builds a learning community
- provides information for strategic planning
- fosters communication
- reassures participants that they are able to implement required changes

Some of the particular circumstances where technical assistance might be required include:

- schools dealing with desegregation, equity, access, and non-discrimination issues
- when expertise outside of the organization is needed
- when objectivity is needed
- when help in identifying a problem is needed
- when a catalyst is needed
- when specific kinds of professional development are needed
- when an oversight of a large process or project is needed

Of course, specific needs of the client always guide the delivery of effective technical assistance.

Choosing Technical Assistance Providers

These questions are intended to stimulate your thinking as you consider technical assistance providers.

Readiness

1. Who is the "audience" for technical assistance? (e.g., site-based decision making teams, preservice teachers, teachers, administrators, district personnel, support personnel, professors, university personnel?)

2. What are your purposes and goals?

3. What are your expectations?

Environmental Analysis

4. What are your most pressing needs?

    - What are the multiple indicators that you use to assess your environment?
    - What things are working well?
    - What challenges are facing your district, schools, college, university?
    - What obstacles stand in the way of overcoming the challenges?
    - What help is needed in determining avenues to identify needs and solutions?

5. What skills, knowledge, and dialogues are necessary for staff to reach program goals?

    - Do you require long or short-term professional development to reach your goals?
    - What are the philosophical and/or theoretical foundations on which your actions may be based?
    - What process will you use to make decisions?

6. What does research say about the areas you have identified as challenges?

    - What do your site-based performance indicators say?
    - How can change best proceed?

Planning

7. How do you see technical assistance fitting into your mission and strategic plan?

8. What type of technical assistance is needed to assist you?

Implementation

9. Who are the key stakeholders involved in implementing changes?

10. How will you implement your plans?

11. What resources are available to you?

12. Have adequate resources been allocated to implement your plan?

13. What is your timeline for implementing changes and/or improvements?

Assessment/Evaluation

14. How will you know that you are successful?

    - How will you use feedback for improvement?

Institutionalization

15. What further improvements will ensure that growth is an integral part of your professional development plan?

Summary

Whether you are a pre-service teacher or a seasoned professional, the technical assistance providers in Region V are available to help you. As we take the next steps in creating a seamless system of technical assistance in Region V, we recognize that there will be "rocks and bends" in the road. We value your opinion. Let us know how we can make the system more accessible to you, and make suggestions for improvement. Guided by the principles of effective technical assistance, our goal is to help all children in Region V succeed. Together, we can make that common goal a reality.

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SECAC–January 1998

Much of the material in this section was adapted from material developed by the Region VIII Comprehensive Assistance Center (STAR Center), San Antonio, Texas.

PROFILE OF FEDERAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS AVAILABLE IN THE STATE OF

ARKANSAS

SOUTHEAST COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE CENTER

COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Name: Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center (SECAC)

Director: Dr. Hai T. Tran

Address: 3330 N. Causeway Blvd., Suite 430
Metairie, LA 70002-3573

Phone: (800) 644-8671
(504) 868-6861

Fax: (504) 831-5242

E-mail: htran@sedl.org

http://www.sedl.org/secac/

Areas Where Services are Provided:

Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi

Purpose:

As a catalyst for change, SECAC works with clients to provide comprehensive services to enable them to develop and implement effective school improvement programs under the auspices of the Improving America's Schools Act, particularly to address the needs of those students who are historically underserved or at risk of academic failure.

Description of Services:

The following services are provided to state educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, tribes, community-based organizations and other recipients of funding under the Improving America's Schools Act.

Information Services

- Information dissemination through newsletters, bulletins and the Internet
- Referral of Technical Assistance and/or Professional Development
- Reference Library
- Information and assistance via mail, telephone & telecommunications

Coordination and Collaboration

- Work cooperatively and regularly share information with federally-supported agencies
- Plan and sponsor state and regional institutes in such areas as Limited English Proficiency/Indian/ Migrant Education, Safe & Drug-Free Schools, School-wide Programs, Technology, and other identified, needed topics

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

- Services to staff of the region's SEAs and education service centers on elements of systemic reform & effective implementation strategies, as well as elements of IASA and specific student populations
- Ongoing, in-depth services to a group of Initiative Schools in five school districts, designed to assist in implementing local school reform initiatives and learn with and from them how to work most effectively with schools that reflect similar contexts
- Ongoing, in-depth services to a group of Priority Schools in high poverty areas that meet specific criteria for intensive assistance
- Short-term services to schools engaged in reform-based activities through:

  Teleconferencing

  Training Workshops

  Regional Conferences, Institutes and Seminars

  On-site Technical Assistance

  Electronic Meeting Group

SECAC Staff:

Dr. Hai T. Tran (htran@sedl.org) Vice President/Director (504) 838-6861	Bilingual Education; ESL Methodology; School Reform
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Vice-President
American Indian Research & Development., Inc.
(405) 364-0656

REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

Name: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)

Director: Dr. Wesley Hoover

Address: 211 East Seventh Street
Austin, TX

Phone: (512) 476-6861 **Fax:** (512) 476-2286

E-mail: whoover@sedl.org http://www.sedl.org/

Areas Where Services are Provided:

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Purpose:

To find, share, and sustain effective solutions for the most urgent problems facing educational systems, practitioners, and decision makers in the southwestern U.S. Particular emphasis in on ensuring educational equity for those children and youth who live in poverty, from a minority population, or who have mental or physical exceptionalities.

Description of Services:

SEDL's primary strategies to meet its mission are those of development, dissemination, training, and technical assistance, supported by evaluation and applied research, and focused on six specific goals:

- Enhancing family and community involvement in education
- Addressing linguistic and cultural diversity
- Aligning and supporting policy development
- Promoting instructional coherence
- Applying technology to school restructuring and learning
- Changing the organization and management of schooling

DESEGREGATION ASSISTANCE CENTER

Name: Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) – Desegregation Assistance Center South Central Collaborative (DAC-SCC)

Director: Dr. Bradley Scott

Address: South Central Collaborative
Suite 350
5835 Callaghan Road
San Antonio, TX

Phone: (210) 684-8180 **Fax:** (210) 684-5389

E-mail: bscott@idra.org http://www.idra.org/

Areas Where Services are Provided:

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Purpose:

Advocates the right of every child to a quality education through research and development activities; the creation, implementation and administration of innovative education programs; and training and technical assistance for teachers, administrators, and parents.

Description of Services:

IDRA staff provide technical assistance, training, and evaluation to public school teachers, administrators, parents, and other decision-makers.

Professional Development. Assists in creating educational solutions through innovative, participatory, and hands-on presentations, workshops and technical assistance that promotes sustained growth and development.

Information Dissemination. Disseminates cutting-edge information to educators, administrators, decision- and policy-makers, parents and community leaders.

Evaluation. Using collaborative and innovative methods, investigates important questions and provides insights into compelling educational issues; sets standards in the design, analysis, and synthesis of timely and useful research involving diverse populations.

Policy. Provides policy and leadership development to promote accountability and responsibility; using inclusive, cutting-edge and broad-based strategies, develops leadership within communities, schools and policy-making bodies to foster collaborative and enlightened educational policies that work for all children.

Early Childhood. Helps early childhood educators create programs that are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, and empower young children, their families and their schools.

THE REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Name: The South Atlantic Regional Resource Center (SARRC)

Director: Tim Kelly

Address: Florida Atlantic University
1236 N. University Drive
Plantation, FL 33322

Phone: (954) 473-6106 **Fax:** (954) 424-4309

E-mail: sarrc@acc.fau.edu http://www.fau.edu/admin/a-n-f/sarrc.htm

Areas Where Services are Provided:

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands

Purpose:

Provides critical information and support to enhance state capacity and facilitate positive systems change to improve services for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Description of Services:

- Designing and conducting training meetings
- Convening and consulting with work groups
- Assisting in the development of policies and procedures
- Analyzing and synthesizing research and best practices
- Developing program manuals and guidelines documents
- Linking clients to model programs and services
- Evaluating the effectiveness of programs and services
- Assisting in the development of strategic and long range plans

REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

Name: SouthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR*TEC)

Director: Dr. Don Holznagel

Address: 41 Marietta Street, NW
Suite 1000
Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: (404) 893-0100 x0102 **Fax:** (404) 577-7737

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Areas Where Services are Provided:

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

Purpose:

Provides technology related assistance through awareness, policy development and planning, staff development and evaluation

Description of Services:

- Toll-free help line/referral service
- Technology Information Clearinghouse
- Referrals to training assistance providers and consultants
- Policy development and planning
- Evaluation assistance and guidance
- Technical assistance

EISENHOWER MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE CONSORTIUM

Name: Eisenhower Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching (SCIMAST)

Director: Dr. Stephen Marble

Address: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, TX 78701

Phone: (512) 476-6861
(800) 201-7435

Fax: (512) 476-2286

E-mail: smarble@sedl.org

http://www.sedl.org/sedl/scimast.html

Areas Where Services are Provided:

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

Purpose:

Supports science and mathematics education with a combination of training, technical assistance, networking, and information resources

Description of Services:

Eisenhower SCIMAST works in partnership with the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse, a national resource center dedicated to increasing the availability and the quality of information about instructional resources for science and mathematics educators. As part of that effort, Eisenhower SCIMAST:

- Maintains a resource/demonstration center
- Houses a multimedia collection of science and mathematics instructional materials for grades K-12 and a current collection of research-based publications
- Provides information on multimedia and print instructional materials, assessment tools, and successful strategies for mathematics and science instruction.
- Sponsors local, state, and regional meetings and conferences
- Administers competitive awards that support local professional development programs
- Sponsors intensive workshops for teachers, providing up-to-date content and modeling of effective teaching practices
- Publishes the *Classroom Compass*, an information bulletin for K-12 mathematics